

Guidelines to reopen the church for worship services from the Elders and COVID 19 Task Force

The Elders have been meeting over the last few weeks, and working with the West Sub COVID Task Force, to set up some guidelines to allow us to open safely soon. It has been a difficult process, with divergent opinions on how to move forward, but we have prayerfully been able to reach compromises and be unified in the decisions we have made, recognizing the sovereignty of God and our dependence on Him to make the best decisions we can for His Church.

First, we want to state that in group settings like church worship, even with social distancing and adherence to CDC & IDPH guidelines, there is a higher risk for COVID-19 virus transmission. This could result in higher rates of infection, hospitalization, and even death. Remote services are the safest option. Each person or family should make their own decision about in person attendance during this time and understand it is perfectly acceptable to stay home.

We continue to recommend remote services for people that are at a higher risk of severe illness to limit their exposure.

When we do meet together and consider how to keep one another safe, here are the guidelines we would like everyone to follow. Please become familiar with these guidelines before you attend.

We have decided that, *initially* will be re-opening with **50 people** in attendance in order to practice social distancing within the Sanctuary. The chairs have been spaced six feet apart from each other, and ten feet apart facing forward for singing, to help prevent the spread of the virus orally. (Families, of course, will be able to sit close together.)

We have set up a **reservation system** on our website in order to reserve your place each Sunday. Once 50 people have registered, any others who want to attend will automatically be given first priority for the next Sunday. *However*, we will not turn anyone away. Our desire is to open with a manageable number that will allow us to begin the process of coming back together safely, and also the chance to re-evaluate our progress weekly. If need be, we may go to two services, until we can all be together.

When you arrive, the doors will be open. We strongly encourage the use of cloth **face coverings**. *Face coverings are most essential when social distancing is difficult*. If you do take it off to sing, or at other times, please do so with consideration of where others are around you. There will be a table when we come in where can pick up a mask if you need one. There will also be **hand sanitizer** for you to use as well.

The elevator, lower level, office, and other areas of the church will not be available for use. We ask that children stay with the parents the entire time they are in the church building. The foyer will be available to stay with young children if needed during the service.

In addition, the church WIFI may not be available in order to allow for smoother transmission of the service online.

Just so you are aware, we will not be passing out any bulletins or inserts. If you want a sermon outline, please pick one up at the table as you enter. Please go directly to the sanctuary, where an usher will help you find your seat, avoiding physical contact with others or congregating in the foyer. Please maintain the social distancing guidelines of six feet separation while talking with others.

Also, we will not be serving food or drinks, or using the drinking fountains until further notice. You are welcome to bring your own water. We will have bottled waters available if needed.

The service will be briefer in length. We will not have a fellowship break or pass an offering bag, but we will have an **offering box** available for you to give if you wish. We strongly urge you to continue giving online if possible.

Thank you for your patience and prayer as we implement these **temporary** measures which will allow us to reopen in a unified way, being gracious to the concerns of others, and honoring Christ as we love each other and strive to serve Him together.